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## THE GENERAL LINGUISTIC CONDITIONS IN ANCIENT ITALY AND GREECE

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BY CARL DARLING BUCK  
University of Chicago

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It will doubtless seem hazardous to attempt to deal at all with so comprehensive a subject in a paper so brief as this must be. Yet I have hoped that it might be possible at least to make clear that there exists a notable contrast between the *general* linguistic conditions of Italy and those of Greece. At the beginning of the historical period there was far greater linguistic divergence in Italy than in Greece: in Italy many languages, some totally unrelated with Latin, as Etruscan and probably Ligurian; some representing other branches of the Indo-European family, as Venetian, Messapian, Celtic, and Greek; others again sister-dialects, but differing enough from Latin to be regarded by the Romans as distinct languages, as Oscan, Umbrian, Volscian, Sabine, etc.;<sup>1</sup> in Greece but one language, though split up into many dialects. But just so much the stronger was the centralizing force in Italy, in language no less than in politics. The advance of the Latin language is as steady and relentless as that of the Roman power, while in Greece that particularism which is so significant in its political history is no less marked in its linguistic conditions. As, except on rare occasions, there was no united Greek people, but only a number of states, each jealous of its own power, so throughout the best part of Greek history there was no uniform Greek language, but only a series of dialects.

The progress of the Latin language follows the general course of the expansion of the Roman power, though the latter may precede the former by a greater or less interval according to the thoroughness of the Romanization. The first advance was presumably among the

<sup>1</sup>A brief survey of the languages and dialects of Italy, and of the most striking differences between the Oscan-Umbrian dialects and Latin, is given in the introduction to the author's *Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian*.

other towns of Latium itself. For it must be remembered that the language we call Latin is, strictly speaking, that of the city of Rome. Other Latin towns had their own peculiarities, which gradually gave way before the Roman standard. The most marked evidence of this is found in the inscriptions of Praeneste and the Praenestine glosses. Some peculiarities of Lanuvium are also quoted.

Of the neighboring peoples the Sabines were among the first to be Romanized. The whole Sabine people received the Roman citizenship in 268 B. C., and it is probable that by this time the Sabine dialect had disappeared. There are no Sabine inscriptions, and the words quoted by Varro as used by the Sabines are merely such as had survived in Latinized form in the Latin spoken there in his time. The Aequians who were finally subdued at the end of the second Samnite war (304 B. C.) and received the Roman citizenship, were probably completely Romanized in the third century. No inscriptions in the Aequian dialect exist. The same is true of the Hernici.

The Volscians, as early as 225 B. C., were no longer reckoned as distinct from the Latins, as they do not appear in Polybius' list of tribes able to furnish troops against the Gauls (Polyb. ii. 24; cf. Conway *Italic Dialects*, p. 268), and had received citizenship by the early part of the second century (Velitrae before 270 B. C.; Fundi, Formiae, Arpinum in 188 B. C.). The only inscription which is certainly Volscian, the bronze of Velletri (Velitrae), belongs probably to the early part of the third century B. C. A quotation from the comic poet Titinius (time of Terence), *Obsce et Volsce fabulantur, nam Latine nesciunt*, indicates that the dialect still survived in the second century.

The Marsians, Vestinians, Paelignians, and Marrucinians, after the close of the second Samnite war, were in alliance with Rome down to the Social War. Not until after the Social War did they receive the Roman citizenship, but the Romanization had already progressed—first, as is natural from their location, among the Marsians. Of the genuine Marsian dialect we have only a few fragments, most of the so-called Marsian inscriptions being simply provincial Latin. This, together with the fact that there is a considerable number of Latin inscriptions earlier than the Social War, shows that Latin had become predominant by the second century at least.

In the Social War the coins of the Marsian consul, Q. Pompaedius Silo, bear the legend *Italia*, while those of the other consul of the allies, the Samnite C. Papius Mutilus, have the Oscan form *Vitelin*. The dialect of the Vestinians, represented by a few fragments, may have survived till the Social War. There are no Latin inscriptions earlier than 100 B. C. The principal, and almost the only, monument of the Marrucian dialect, the bronze of Rapino, is from about 250 B. C., but in the Latin alphabet. Latin inscriptions are not earlier than the Ciceronian period. Paelignian, represented by some thirty inscriptions, is the best known and survived the longest of these minor dialects. Some of the inscriptions, all of which are in the Latin alphabet, are of the Ciceronian period, while, on the other hand, there are some Latin inscriptions of the time of Sulla.

The Faliscans, who nearly always sided with the Etruscans in their early conflicts with Rome, were definitely subdued in 241 B. C. and compelled to abandon their chief city, Falerium, for a site on the plain. Most of the Faliscan inscriptions, which are numerous but very short, are from the period preceding this, but some are as late as the early part of the second century. Latin inscriptions also begin to appear in the second century. It is probable that by 150 B. C., if not sooner, the Faliscan dialect had ceased to exist.

The conquest of Umbria was complete in the early part of the third century (battle of Sentinum 295 B. C.), but in some parts the dialect lasted into the first century. The latest of the Iguvinian tables, those in the Latin alphabet, are without doubt as late as this, though, being entirely of religious content, the acts of the Atiedian brotherhood, they might represent merely an artificial retention of a language which had already ceased to exist in ordinary use. But of the minor inscriptions there are some which are hardly much earlier than the Social War; e. g., one from Assisi. However, the probability is that Latin prevailed in most of Umbria in the second century B. C.

Picenum was conquered about 268 B. C., and seems to have been rapidly Romanized. There are no inscriptions in the original dialect, while Latin inscriptions begin in the third century.

The Etruscans, whose conquest by the Romans began with the destruction of Veii in 396 B. C., made their last stand in 284 B. C., when they, united with the Celtic Boii, were defeated, and all

Etruria brought under Roman sway. But the Romanization seems to have proceeded but slowly until the first century, when Sulla, in revenge upon the Etruscan nobles for siding with Marius, confiscated their lands and planted numerous military colonies. Varro (v. 55) mentions an author of Etruscan tragedies named Volunius. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (i. 30) speaks of the Etruscans as differing from all other peoples in language and custom. Livy (v. 33) speaks of the tribes of the Rhaetian Alps still retaining traces of Etruscan speech. Even Aulus Gellius (xi. 7.4), in the second century A. D., speaks of Etruscan as if it were still a living language. Some of the Etruscan inscriptions are as late as early imperial times, but not those of southern Etruria. Here the language must have died out soonest, surviving much later in parts of central and northern Etruria.

The Celtic tribes in northern Italy were conquered in the third century (the Senones in 282, the tribes of the central plain on both sides the Po in 224-222 B. C.), and the province Gallia Cisalpina created probably in 191 B. C. The land was speedily studded with prosperous Roman colonies (Placentia 219, Cremona 219; etc., etc.), and the Romanization proceeded with great rapidity. Polybius, who traveled through the country about the middle of the second century, says that Gauls were to be found only in a few places at the foot of the Alps. And there is no sufficient reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of this statement. There are less than half a dozen Celtic inscriptions from Italy, and of these probably none is later than 150 B. C. From the reference of Aulus Gellius (xi. 7. 4) to Gallic speech there is no ground for inferring that it was still spoken south of the Alps.

The Ligurian tribes were subjected to Rome in the second century (187-154 B. C.) and united with Italy under Augustus. How long they retained their language is wholly problematical. There are no Ligurian inscriptions from this region, but early Latin inscriptions are also wanting.

The Venetians were brought under Roman sway in 215 B. C. and united with Italy in 42 B. C. Polybius (ii. 17) speaks of their language as distinct from Celtic. Of the numerous short Venetian inscriptions found near Este the bilinguals at least are as late as the second

century B. C. (note, e. g., Latin *dedit libens merito*, with the abl. in *ō*, not *ōd*.)

Turning to southern Italy, we find the progress of Latin slower. As of all the Italic peoples the Samnites were the most persistent opponents of the Roman power, so their language, the Oscan, was of all the sister-dialects of Latin the most vigorous, the last to yield place to Latin. After the Social War, Latin of course became the official language, and Oscan is no longer employed in inscriptions of a public character. But Varro speaks of a certain word as existing in his own time in the language of the Samnites (Aul. Gell. xi. 1), and there is evidence that in the first century A. D. Oscan was still employed to some extent at Pompeii, Roman as this city had become. For there are some rude Oscan scrawls on the walls, which were made not long before its destruction. It is altogether likely that the language survived even longer in parts of Samnium.

Messapian also lasted down to imperial times. The inscriptions are mostly of the second century B. C. or earlier. But Messapian glosses were collected by a Greek grammarian (Seleucus) in about the time of the Social War, and Strabo derives the name Brundisium from *βρέντιον*, which he says *is* the word for deer's head in Messapian (vi. 3. 6).

All the rest of southern Italy had become almost completely Hellenized, under the influence of the numerous Greek colonies, long before it was brought under Roman sway. So not only Bruttium, Lucania, and part of Calabria, but even Apulia (in which there were no Greek colonies), as is shown by the numerous Greek coins of Apulia from the third or even the fourth century B. C. And just as Sicily remained Greek in speech for centuries after its conquest by the Romans, so here the Roman sway, secure after the defeat of Pyrrhus in 275 B. C., did not result in the displacement of Greek by Latin much before the beginning of our era, and not everywhere even then. Horace speaks of the inhabitants of Canusium as bilingual. Strabo says that the only cities in Italy which were still Greek in his time were Naples, Tarentum, and Rhegium. That Naples remained thoroughly Greek in imperial times is known from other sources. Even official inscriptions are in Greek as late as Vespasian, and private inscriptions much later.

If now we review the spread of Latin by centuries, we may assume that it became the prevailing form of speech about as follows: in the third century B. C., among the Sabines, Aequians, and Hernici; in the second century B. C., among the Volscians, Faliscans, Marsians, in Umbria, Gallia Cisalpina, Liguria, Venetia; in the first century B. C., among the Paelignians, Marrucinians, and Vestinians, and in southern Etruria. Probably the only surviving languages in the time of Augustus were Etruscan, Oscan, Messapian, and Greek, which was the last to leave the field.

Turning now to Greece, we find it occupied, in the historical period, exclusively by a Greek-speaking people. It is only on the confines of the Greek world that one meets with languages other than Greek: to the north, the speech of the Macedonians, and the various Thracian and Illyrian tribes, of which we know only enough to say that they are Indo-European; in Asia Minor, Phrygian, Lycian, Carian, Lydian, etc., of which Phrygian is the only one with a clear claim to be classed as Indo-European. Cyprus was still partly Phoenician in the historical period. In a corner of Crete "Eteocretan," of which we now have three inscriptions, survived as late as 400 B. C. From Lemnos we have also a pre-Hellenic inscription, which seems to show some affinity to Etruscan.

That Greece proper, as well as the islands, was once occupied by a pre-Hellenic people or peoples, is beyond question, and to this earlier population is generally ascribed a part at least of that "Aegean" civilization which archaeological evidence now discloses to us from the third millennium B. C. on. But at just what stage the Hellenization took place is the great unsolved problem of this period. The question is not so much, When did a Greek-speaking people make its first appearance in Greece? as When were they there in sufficient strength to cause their language to prevail? It is generally taken for granted that the "Minoan" period in Crete is pre-Hellenic, and this is probably true, though only the decipherment of the Cretan characters can furnish tangible evidence. But with the later Mycenaean period, in the second millennium B. C., we come at least within hailing distance of a time later than which it is impossible to place the Hellenization of Greece proper. The Dorian occupation

of the Peloponnesus was, beyond any question, preceded by a stratum of Hellenic population, whose speech survived in Arcadia, and in Cyprus which was colonized from the Peloponnesus before the Doric invasion. Some, indeed, assume another, intermediate, stratum, but of this the evidence is anything but conclusive. At the latest, some centuries before the close of the second millennium B. C. the Greeks must have been in possession of Greece proper and well started in their expansion over the Aegean. And no chronological improbability is involved in assuming that the flower of Mycenaean civilization was already Hellenic. At any rate, from the beginning of recorded history we find the Greek language in full possession of Greece. So far as we know, no pre-Hellenic language survived in any corner of Greece proper, nor, with the few exceptions named, in the Aegean.

But when we speak thus of the supremacy of the Greek language, or when ancient writers speak of the Greeks as of one language, we must remember that "language" is here used in a broader, looser, less specific sense than when we speak of the "Latin language." For until a comparatively late period there existed only a series of dialects, each of which had equal right to be termed Greek, but no one of which was in a position to be called *the* Greek language. That there was not even a common literary language is evident to all. We need only contrast that mixture of Ionic and Aeolic, more exactly Old Ionic with the retention of many Aeolic forms, which constitutes the language of Homer and so strongly influenced all subsequent poetry, with the Aeolic of Alcaeus and Sappho, the Doric of the choral lyric, the Attic of the drama. The earliest prose-writers were Ionians, and there was a time when Ionic bid fair to become the language of literary prose. But with the growing political and intellectual supremacy of Athens in the fifth century B. C., Ionic yielded this position to Attic, which never lost it, even though here and there a prose-writer, like Archimedes of Syracuse, might employ his native dialect.

But the literary dialects afford only the feeblest conception of the actual speech conditions in Greece. They represent but a few of the many dialects, and even then only in a more or less artificial form



not corresponding exactly to anything actually spoken at a given time or place. Their rôle once established, the employment of one or the other depends upon the class of literature rather than upon the nativity of the author. The great majority of the dialects play no part whatever in the literature. Furthermore, the victory of Attic as the language of literary prose is far from being equivalent to its general adoption for ordinary purposes throughout Greece. It is from the many thousands of inscriptions, representing all kinds of private and public records, from all parts of Greece, that we must learn what were the different dialects,<sup>1</sup> how long they retained their identity, and what were the various movements toward uniformity which ended in the supremacy of the Attic *κοινή*.

Not only in earlier times, but, in most parts of Greece, long after Attic had become the form of literary prose, each state employed its own dialect, not only in private and public monuments of internal concerns, but in those of a more external or interstate character. To give but a few illustrations from the many available examples, an honorary decree of a Boeotian city is in the Boeotian dialect, no matter whether the recipient is a citizen of Athens, Delphi, Alexandria, or Tarentum. When the Megarians arbitrate a dispute between Corinth and Epidaurus, the decision is rendered in the Megarian dialect, and we find it set up in this form at Epidaurus. A

<sup>1</sup> While no extended discussion of the interrelations of the dialects can be attempted here, one point may be emphasized. The distribution of Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic, which is shown by means of coloring on our maps of ancient Greece, is unfortunately based upon a statement of Strabo, which in an important respect is at variance with earlier traditions and flatly contradicted by linguistic evidence. The dialects of Phocis, Locris, Elis, etc., might be fairly classified as Doric in the wider sense, but not as Aeolic. The representation of Arcadian as Aeolic is less serious. Indeed, so long as we hold strictly to the threefold division of the dialects, Arcadian belongs more nearly under Aeolic than under any other. But it is important to recognize that, while the existence of Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic elements is an undoubted fact in Greek history, and one of paramount importance to an understanding of the dialect relations, there is no warrant, either in the earlier Greek tradition or in the linguistic evidence, for making this an all-inclusive classification. There are dialects which do not belong strictly to either group, just as there are peoples whom the historians never reckon as either Ionic, Doric, or Aeolic. For example, Thucydides, in describing the forces engaged at Syracuse (iii. 57), makes the most of the distinction between Ionic, Doric, and Aeolic nations, but gives this up when he comes to the Arcadians.

The most fundamental division of the Greek dialects is that into East and West Greek dialects, these terms referring to their location prior to the great migrations. The East Greek are the "Old Hellenic" dialects, that is those employed by the peoples who held the stage almost exclusively in the period represented by the Homeric poems, when the West Greek peoples still remained in obscurity in the northwest. This East Greek division is represented in the historical period by three groups: (1) The Attic-Ionic. (2) The Aeolic, comprising Lesbian, Thessalian, and Boeotian. By emigration the Asiatic Aeolians escaped mixture, so that Lesbian is the Aeolic dialect *par excellence*. The Thessalians and Boeotians were West Greek tribes which overran lands formerly Aeolic and adopted the speech of the conquered in part. But there is a very considerable admixture of West Greek elements in both

treaty of alliance between Elis and Heraea (in Arcadia) has come down to us in the Elean version found at Olympia, and doubtless a corresponding Arcadian version was set up at Heraea. When Philip V of Macedon sends certain recommendations to the city of Larissa, he writes in the Attic *κοινή*, which was the language of the Macedonian court, but the decrees which the city passes in answer to the letters of Philip are in the Thessalian dialect. The regulations of the religious sanctuaries of Greece are drawn up in the dialect of the state which has direct charge over them, no less in the great Hellenic centers than in those of local fame. As those of Delos are in Attic, and were at one time without doubt in Ionic, so those of Olympia are in Elean, and those of Delphi in Delphian, though after the Aetolian domination the Attic *κοινή* was employed for a time.

The same dialectic diversity which we find in the written records we must assume existed in the case of communication by word of mouth. What happened, for example, at such a convention as that held at the Isthmus before the second Persian invasion, or when, before the Peloponnesian War, the Athenian assembly was harangued by the envoys of Corinth and Corcyra, or the Spartan assembly by envoys of Corinth and the other allies, and of Athens? That as early as the Persian War, or even the Peloponnesian War, Attic was used as a general medium, is not to be thought of. That a Spartan would use Attic is just as unlikely as that an Athenian would use

dialects, stronger in Boeotian than in Thessalian, and in Thessaly itself stronger in the Thessalotis than in the Pelasgiotis. (3) Arcadian-Cyprian. The close connection of these two dialects is unmistakable, and is to be accounted for by the fact that Cyprus was colonized, not necessarily from Arcadia itself, as tradition states, but from the Peloponnesian coast, when its speech was like that which in Arcadia survived the Doric migration. This group, then, represents the pre-Doric speech of most of the Peloponnesus, and has the best right to the designation "Achaean," but this term is used in so many different senses that it is perhaps best avoided. These dialects have several important features in common with the Aeolic dialects and are sometimes combined with them in a larger group ("Aeolic in the widest sense," "North and South Achaean," "Central Greek dialects"). But they also have some striking points in common with Attic-Ionic, and are better classified as an intermediate group.

The West Greek dialects are also subdivided into two groups: (1) The Doric dialects proper; that is, those of the Doric states of the Peloponnesus and their colonies. (2) The Northwest Greek dialects; that is, Phocian, Locrian, Aetolian, etc., and also Elean and Achaean. These share in the general characteristics of the Doric dialects, and are sometimes called Doric in the wider sense. But it is better to restrict "Doric" to its usual historical sense, and to employ West Greek as the more general term. Some West Greek dialects show traces of the East Greek dialects once spoken in their territory.

#### WEST GREEK DIALECTS

1. Northwest Greek dialects: Phocian, Locrian, Elean, etc.
2. Doric dialects: Laconian, Corinthian, Megarian, Argolic, Cretan, etc.

#### EAST GREEK DIALECTS

1. Aeolic dialects: Lesbian, (Thessalian), (Boeotian).
2. Attic-Ionic.
3. Arcadian-Cyprian.

Laconian. It is only what is to be expected that Thucydides, who disclaims all intention of reproducing the exact words of the speeches quoted, should put nearly everything in Attic form. (Even incidental references to the divergent speech of the Greeks, like that in iii. 112, when he relates how Demosthenes in a night attack upon the Ambraciots placed the Messenians in the front rank and ordered them to speak to the enemy in their native Doric, thus putting the sentinels off their guard, are comparatively rare with him.) We must assume that each speaker used his own dialect, though quite likely modified occasionally by the elimination of some features, which, measured by the usage, not of any one dialect, but by the other dialects as a whole, were distinctly felt as "provincialisms." There is no reason to doubt that all the dialects were mutually intelligible for purposes of simple communication, and most of them in the case of more extended discourse. Yet I must confess to the strong impression that if a Thessalian or Locrian, an Arcadian or Elean, not to speak of a Cyprian or Cretan, had made an extended harangue before a general convention of Greek states, in the unmitigated form of his dialect, such as we know it in the early inscriptions, he would have been followed with extreme difficulty, if at all.

The foundation of the ultimate supremacy of Attic is to be sought in the political conditions of the fifth century B. C. In this we refer to something more than the fact, important as it is, that in this period Athens became the intellectual center of Greece and Attic the recognized language of literary prose. It is within the sphere of influence represented by the Delian confederacy and the Athenian empire that Attic made its first advance as an ordinary medium of communication. Of all dialects it is Ionic which shows the first signs of Attic influence and is the first to lose its identity as a distinct dialect. Some traces of this influence are seen even in the Ionic inscriptions of the fifth century, especially in the islands, and in the fourth century the majority of inscriptions show at least a mixture of Attic forms, and some, even from the early part of the century, are substantially Attic. After this, Ionic practically ceased to exist as a distinct dialect, though some Ionic peculiarities are occasionally found in much later times. It is this

Attic, already well-nigh established in Ionic territory, and in some respects modified by Ionic, that the Macedonians took up and spread, and which is henceforth termed the *κοινή*, or, more specifically, the Attic *κοινή*.

The Macedonian period, indeed, forms the principal landmark in the evolution of a standard language in Greece. For in it the Attic *κοινή* was spread over a vast territory and permanently established in places which were to become leading centers of Greek life. Yet this is only a stage, marking neither the beginning, as we have seen, nor, still less, the end. Excepting Ionic, and Cyprian, of which we have no later record, the other dialects, though showing more or less *κοινή* influence, remained in common use in inscriptions from one to three centuries later. If, for the sake of brevity,<sup>1</sup> we ignore what is merely *κοινή* influence in the dialect, or vice versa, dialectic survivals in the *κοινή* (such as  $\bar{\alpha}=\eta$ , which is found as late as the third century A. D.), we may give the following approximate dates of the substitution of the *κοινή* for the dialect: in Elis, at least in the public inscriptions of Olympia, near the end of the third century B. C.; in Thessaly and Boeotia, in the second half of the second century B. C.; so, apparently, in Lesbos, though the use of the dialect in inscriptions was revived in imperial times.

In most Doric lands a sort of modified Doric, substantially Doric, but with many local peculiarities eliminated and a strong admixture of forms from the Attic *κοινή*, and which is conveniently designated as the Doric *κοινή*, was employed down to and even into our era. In Rhodes, for example, this style still prevails in inscriptions of the first century A. D., and we have the express statement of Suetonius (*Tib.* 56) that the Rhodians still spoke Doric in the time of Tiberius.

A similar type, but based on the Northwest Greek dialects, rather than upon Doric in the narrower sense, and so best termed the Northwest Greek *κοινή*, was also widely employed in the last three centuries B. C. Its use is closely connected with the political power of the Aetolian league. We find it in the inscriptions of Aetolia, western Locris, Phocis, Malis, Pthiotis, (where it replaced the native Thessalian), Cephallenia (cf. Polyb. iv. 6), and Ithaca; further in

<sup>1</sup>The author has gathered materials for a more detailed discussion of this matter, which will be published at some future time in *Classical Philology*.

Arcadia, where it displaced the radically different native Arcadian, only to yield itself later in turn to the Attic *κοινή*, in Messenia, and to some extent in Laconia. A trace of it is found even in distant Crete (dat. pl. *λιμένους*), reminding us of the Aetolian and Cretan affiliations and conflicts in the second century B. C. (Polyb. iv. 53).

At Delphi the conditions are particularly complicated. The dialect is pure in the inscriptions of the late fifth or early fourth century B. C., but Attic influence is plain in the temple-accounts of 353-325 B. C. With the Aetolian domination (278-178 B. C.) a new element is added, that of the Northwest Greek *κοινή*, resulting in the remarkable mixture (e. g., dat. pl. *παντεσσι, παντοισ, τασι*) seen in the numerous proxeny and manumission decrees, some of them as late as the first and second centuries A. D.

A good illustration of the conditions in the Greek world at the beginning of the second century B. C. is furnished by a series of inscriptions recently unearthed at Magnesia on the Maeander, in Asia Minor. These consist of replies to an invitation of Magnesia to participate in the festival of Artemis Leucophryena. Those in the Attic *κοινή*, so far as their sources are known, are, with only one exception, from Attic-Ionic territory or the Macedonian cities of the Orient, e. g., Athens, Chalcis, Paros, Teos, Clazomenae, Tralles, Laodicea, etc. From other parts of Greece come decrees in the various dialects, though of course no longer pure; e. g., Arcadian, Boeotian, Lesbian, Thessalian, Doric *κοινή* (from Corinth, Corcyra, Apollonia, Epidamnus, Epirus, Acarnania, Achaea, Cnidus, Cos(?), Rhodes), and Northwest Greek *κοινή* (from Aetolia, Cephallenia, Ithaca, Phocis, and Messenia).

What has been said of the survival of the dialects applies expressly to their employment in inscriptions. How far this reflects the actual speech conditions is a matter of some dispute. In some cases, undoubtedly, the dialect was spoken after it had ceased to be used in writing. And, on the other hand, there are cases where its use in inscriptions is clearly artificial, a conscious archaism. Many factors, such as the private or public character of the documents, must be taken into account. But in general the author agrees with those who hold that the inscriptions give us a fairly approximate idea of the conditions in ordinary speech.